

Coega Steel issued with prohibition notice

Department of Employment and Labour inspectors have issued a prohibition notice to Coega Steel in Gqeberha after the company was found to have flouted various health and safety regulations.



Source: Dmytro Shestakov – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

The discovery of non compliance came to effect after an Occupational Health and Safety Inspector received anonymous pictures of a Coega Steel employee with burns on the hands and face due to an explosion that took place at the employer's furnace department.

“The life threatening incident which left employees traumatised revealed that a total of five employees were injured on the day. All these employees sustained multiple burns all over their bodies from face, neck, chest, head, hands, ankle due to the explosion,” said the department in a statement on Thursday, 2 September.

It is alleged that the incident happened on 22 August 2021, during a night shift and was not reported to the department in terms of legislation.

“The employer continued with production on the same day without conducting an internal investigation in order to get to the root cause of the incident and concluded that the incident was due to human error.”

Employment and Labour inspectors handed over prohibition notice to stop all operations at the furnace department where the explosion took place, as there were no steps or action taken by the employer to prevent the re-occurrence of such an incident.

“The employer was further instructed to attend to the traumatised employees. To-date the employer has not yet reported the incident as prescribed.

“There is a high rate of fatal incidents in the sectors such as agriculture, chemicals, iron and steel as well as construction and investigations regarding the incident is underway. As the custodians of the Occupational Safety Act (OHSA), the department will make sure that employee rights are protected and employers who contravene the law are brought to book,” said the department.

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